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Main content

Article Preview :

Selling the Church: The English Parish in Law, Commerce, and Religion, 1350-1550. By Robert C. Palmer. Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002. 300 pp. \$49.95.

Robert Palmer begins this book by stating that Henry VIII, between 1529 and 1540, "reformed the English parish from a commercial enterprise into a pastoral institution," and in the process transformed English society. Though I believe this statement exaggerates both Henry's achievements and the significance of Palmer's findings, this book nonetheless provides a noteworthy contribution to the study of the Reformation in England. Overall, Palmer shows the great importance of legal change to the Reformation and therefore of legal sources to historians of that momentous development. More particularly, the work incorporated a number of significant findings. First, Palmer shows how the English government was increasing royal control over the church even before the Reformation itself began. Second, he shows how the heavy use by...

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^ Robert C. Palmer, *Selling the Church: The English Parish in Law, Commerce, and Religion, 1350–1550* (2002), p. 27. ^ <http://www.bartleby.com/213/0407.html>. ^ Steven H. Gale, *Encyclopedia of British Humorists: Geoffrey Chaucer to John Cleese* (1996), p. 1016. ^ <http://www.cai.cam.ac.uk/college/past/fourMoments/1557.php>. ^ David Loewenstein, Janel M. Mueller, *The Cambridge History of Early Modern English Literature* (2002), p. 91. ^ MacCulloch, p. 128. ^ For example, in Henry Soames, *The History of the Reformation of the Church of England* (1826), p. 478. ^ a b <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=78028>. ^ <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=77126>. In the years of expanding state authority following the Black Death, English common law permitted the leasing of parishes by their rectors and vicars, who then pursued interests elsewhere and left the parish in

the control of lay lessees. But a series of statutes enacted by Henry VIII between 1529 and 1540 effectively reduced such clerical absenteeism. Robert Palmer examines this transformation of the English parish and argues that it was an important part of the English Reformation. Palmer analyzes an extensive set of data drawn from common law records to reveal a vigorous and effective effort Selling the church the English parish in law, commerce, and religion, 1350-1550 / by: Palmer, Robert C., 1947- Published: (2002). Search Options. Search History. Advanced Search. Find More. Browse the Catalog. Browse Alphabetically. In the years of expanding state authority following the Black Death, English common law permitted the leasing of parishes by their rectors and vicars, who then pursued interests elsewhere and left the parish in the control of lay lessees. But a series of statutes enacted by Henry VIII between 1529 and 1540 effectively reduced such clerical absenteeism. Robert Palmer examines this transformation of the English parish and argues that it was an important part of the English Reformation. Palmer analyzes an extensive set of data drawn from common law records to reveal a vigorous and effective effort